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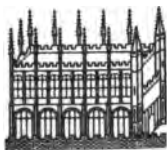
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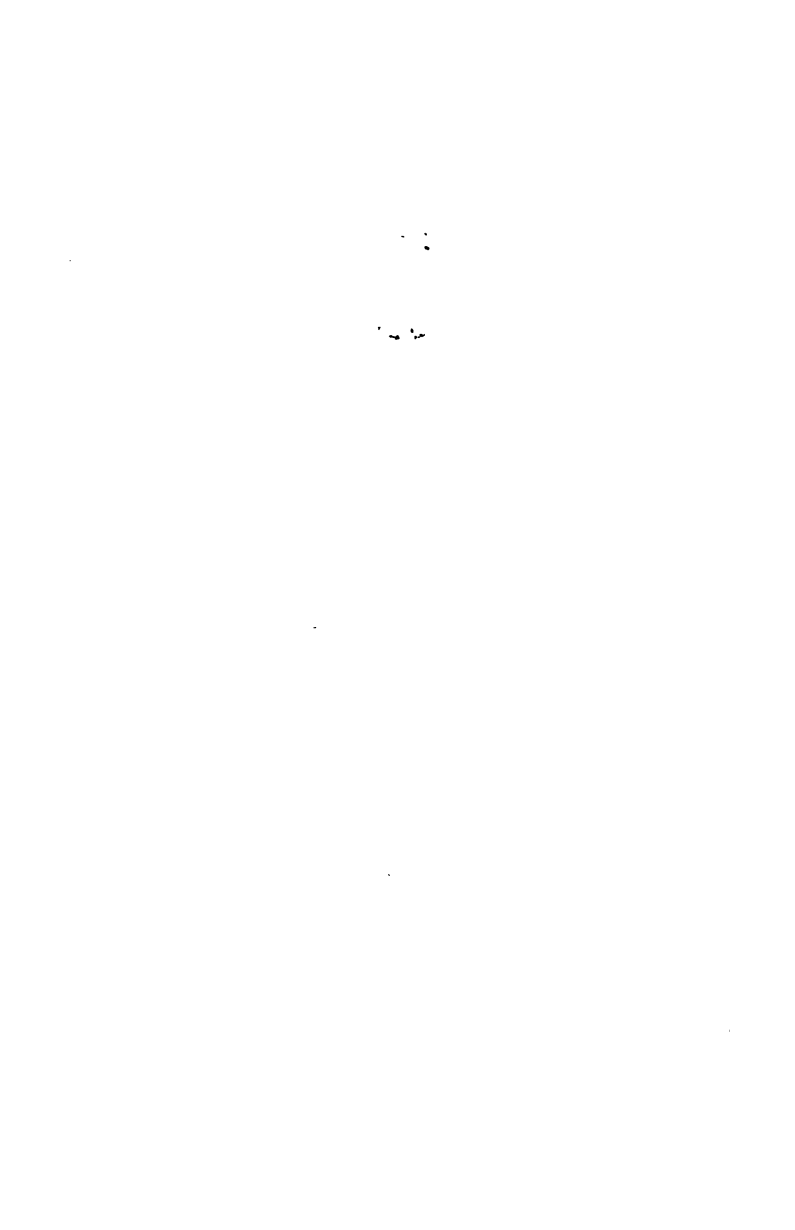
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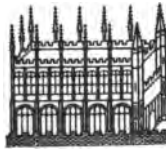
THE following pages are, with very slight alterations, and those only for the sake of method and connection, extracted from *Three Sermons on the Incarnation of the Son of God*, and the Notes appended to them, in a Volume of "*SERMONS chiefly on Subjects connected with the present State and Circumstances of the Church and of the World,*" lately published by Seeley and Burnside. The solicitations of several friends, and the favourable opinion of these attempts to refute Mr. Irving's heretical opinions concerning the Human Nature of our blessed Lord, expressed by several Clergymen whose judgement he cannot but respect, have induced the Author to republish them in this shape; in the hope that they may be made useful to some whose views of the great and fundamental doctrine of the Incarnation are yet in some measure indistinct or wavering. May God command His blessing upon them, for Jesus Christ's sake !
Amen.



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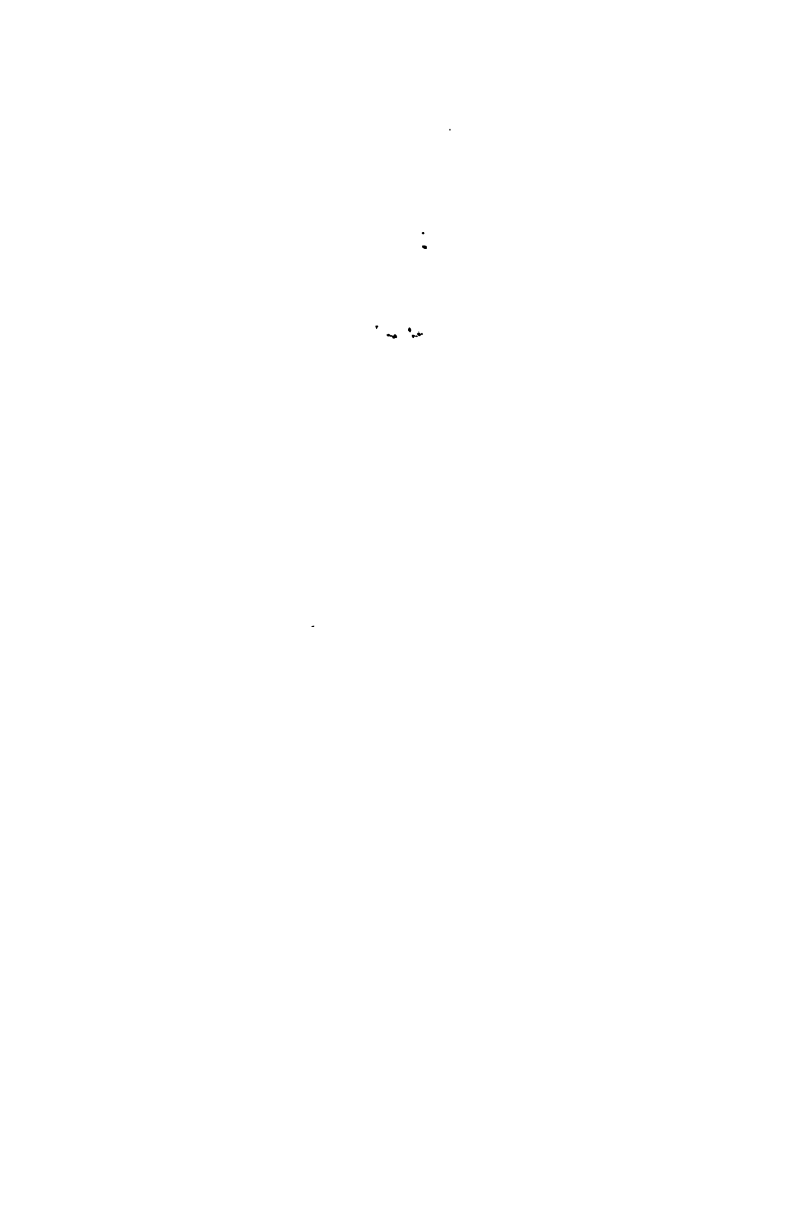
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Person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very Man."

To this should be added the Fifteenth Article:—"Christ, in the truth of our nature, was made like unto us in all things, sin only except; from which He was clearly void, both in His flesh and in His spirit. He came to be the Lamb without spot, who, by sacrifice of Himself once made, should take away the sins of the world: and sin, as St. John saith, was not in Him." That is to say, from all sin, *both original and actual*, He was altogether free—untainted with its guilt, or its pollution, both in flesh and spirit; and this, too, in regard to all those remainders of corruption, with which the holiest believers have to struggle, even to the end of their earthly pilgrimage. For the contrast is clearly marked in the remainder of the Article; which I also quote, because it serves to shew most distinctly what is the meaning of our Church, when it declares, according to the Scriptures, that *in Christ was no sin*. "But all we the rest, although baptized, and born again in Christ, yet offend

in many things ; and, if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." We maintain, then, that in the very sense in which sin is in the holiest believer upon earth (and he would be a self-deceiver and a liar, if he denied it), in the same sense it *never was* in Christ.

The Eighth Article of the Confession of the Kirk of Scotland also admirably expresses the true doctrine:—"The Son of God, the Second Person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance, and equal with the Father, did, when the fulness of time was come, take upon Him man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin ; being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one Person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which Person is very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man."

This, then, is what we mean when we say, the Eternal Word was made flesh,—*that He took upon Him our nature, “with all its essential properties ;”* and this is that which is properly included in the expression “*human nature,*” when used in such a connexion. It includes all that which constitutes man truly *man*—all that is essential to his being really *man*, and not another kind of creature. Let it, then, be remembered, that “*human nature,*” in Adam before he fell and after he fell, in all the unconverted sinners and all the believers upon earth—yea, also, in all the saints in heaven and all the damned in hell—is *one and the same*. Though the individuals who partake of that one common nature are in infinitely diversified conditions, yet they are, one and all, truly *men*. If Adam by the Fall became a being of a different *nature* from what he was before, it follows, that either before or after the Fall he could not be truly *man*. And to say that “*human nature*” is now *essentially* different from what it was before the Fall, would be, in fact, to deny that God ever created *man* at all.

To illustrate this point yet further. It is manifest that *angels* and *devils* are partakers of the same nature : that is to say, *devils* are nothing else but *fallen angels* ; and herein consists their misery. They cannot cease to partake of that noble and glorious nature which God gave them when He created them ; but are doomed to exist, in consequence of their own rebellion, in a fallen and sinful condition ; which is also an *unnatural*, and therefore *miserable*, condition. And this may be illustrated by a simple reference to the body. Its *natural* state is a state of health and comfort : in disease and anguish it is in an *unnatural* state : when *dead*, its *nature* is changed, and then its sufferings cease. So, also, a palace or a temple may be in ruins ; but *the nature of the building* is not thereby changed : it doth not thereby become a castle or a cottage.

Nor let it be objected to all this, that I am leading you into discussions which are very deep. The subject of the Incarnation of Christ is of necessity one of the deepest that can possibly engage our attention. If,

therefore, we would set our minds to consider duly the Glorious Mystery of the Person of our Redeemer, we *must* think deeply ; we must be prepared for enquiries abstruse and profound. But when we feel that we are in danger of losing ourselves, we can, and must, come back to the simple words of Scripture.

And when we come back to this plain ground, we find that "IT IS WRITTEN," not only that Christ was "without sin" (Heb. iv. 15) ; that "He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth" (1 Pet. ii. 22) ; but also that He "*knew* no sin" (2 Cor. v. 21) ; which declares Him to have been as free from the inward consciousness of sin as from the actual commission of it. He was "begotten holy" (for this is the true meaning of the words of the angel, in Luke i. 35) that He might be indeed "a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. i. 19).

His holy manhood, therefore, was a fit habitation for That which is everlastingly and unchangeably pure and holy. In this He dwelt, in this He tabernacled : as it is

written, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." As God dwelt in the Tabernacle, and vouchsafed to manifest His presence among the children of Israel; so in His holy manhood He dwelt in the midst of men, and exhibited unto us a living Temple (John ii. 19, 21), in which dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Col. ii. 9). "And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father:" for even in that lowly form, and in the garb of afflicted, despised, and suffering humanity, the spiritual eye may clearly discern that Glory displayed which is infinite, eternal, and divine. So that it is evident, to all who duly contemplate the character, the conversation, the discourses and doctrine, the works and miracles, of the meek and lowly Jesus, that He was indeed "the Only-begotten of the Father"—perfect God, as well as perfect man.

When it is said, "Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren" (Heb. ii. 17), the words plainly imply a necessity that it should be so; a

necessity arising out of the Divine Perfections, and the nature of that work and those offices which Eternal Wisdom and Goodness assigned to our Redeemer : a necessity also extending to "all things" that might fit Him to be "a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." And this necessity, of being made like unto His brethren "*in all things,*" admitted of *only one exception*, which is elsewhere expressed, and here very plainly implied. It is said, in various other places, that He was altogether "without sin;" and it is *here* implied, inasmuch as it is said, "to make reconciliation for the sins of the people;" and the whole of the ceremonial law (to which the Apostle is continually referring, directly or indirectly, throughout this Epistle) most distinctly and emphatically sets forth that He who is to make atonement for sin, to be a sacrifice for sin, must be without sin Himself, and altogether "holy, harmless, undefiled;" pure, spotless, and without blemish. The same thing is

also typified in all that was enjoined respecting the High Priest under the Law.

But, with this one exception, He was "*in all things* made like unto His brethren." He was therefore compassed about with *all* our sinless infirmities: He hungered and thirsted; He was wearied and He slept; He was grieved, He was troubled, He groaned and wept; He felt the tenderest feelings of sympathizing sorrow, and the stronger emotions of holy indignation and anger; His soul was exceeding sorrowful at the prospect of suffering, and on account of the perfidious treachery and base ingratitude of His disciples; He felt the anguish of the scourge that rent His sacred flesh, and of the cruel nails that pierced His hands and feet; He felt the intolerable agony of the conflict against sin and temptation, and of the fearful hidings of His Father's face, which *to Him* was doubtless more terrible than all. All this is clearly stated in the Sacred Writings, and whatsoever else could testify that He possessed and exercised all the feelings and affections

of true and proper humanity, and condescended to take upon Himself every kind of weakness and infirmity which, without being sinful, is natural to man. And when His hour was come, He really and truly died. Not that any human power could have taken away His life without His own consent; for, being perfectly free from all sin, He had absolute power over His own life, and shewed Himself able to save it by miracle, whenever it was threatened or assaulted: no man, therefore, took it away from Him, but he laid it down of Himself; and, not only calmly but triumphantly at last, delivered up His soul into the hands of His Heavenly Father (Luke xxiii. 45, and John xix. 30, *Greek*).

Having thus endeavoured to state fully and clearly the Doctrine of our Lord's Humanity, I proceed to notice, in the first instance, some unwarrantable assertions, which have been made by Mr. Irving and his partizans, as to the Scriptural use of the word "flesh;" as upon these the whole strength of their arguments, in favour of

their false doctrines, mainly rests:—The substance of all these I find in a tract, which was put into my hands some time ago, written (as I have reason to believe) by Mr. Drummond, and in which, as is pretended, “the orthodox is contrasted with the heretical doctrine” concerning the human nature of Christ. The words are these: “There is not a single passage in the whole Bible in which the word ‘flesh’ is not used to signify a weak, mean, impotent, sinful, God-hating, rebellious, ignorant, &c. thing; and not one where it is applied to a righteous, good, holy, strong, immortal, and perfect thing.”

Similar assertions have been made by Mr. Irving, in his treatise “On the Human Nature of Christ,” p. 20:—“For what is the meaning of flesh in Scripture? Is it not the sinful, mortal, corruptible, fleeting thing, of which it is said, ‘all flesh is grass;’ of which it is said, ‘the flesh warreth against the Spirit;’ of which it is said, ‘in it (in the flesh) dwelleth no good thing?’ If, then, it be said that

Christ came in flesh, who shall dare to interpret that word, 'flesh,' otherwise than all Scripture doth interpret it? who shall interpret it other than *sinful flesh*?" [In this short passage, by the way, there are two misquotations of Scripture, one of which is material to the argument.—1. It is nowhere said in the Scripture that "the flesh warreth against the Spirit;" but the "flesh lusteth," &c. I suppose Mr. Irving has been confounding in his mind Gal. v. 17, and Rom. vii. 23.—2. Paul does not say "in the flesh" generally, but "in *my* flesh" (*ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ μου*) "dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. vii. 18). This may be mere carelessness on Mr. I.'s part: but by such carelessness he gives place to the devil, who is doubtless ever at hand to help him to pervert the Scriptures, and to sophisticate away sound doctrine: and Mr. I. would do well to lay to heart the Apostolic warning, 1 Pet. v. 8, lest he should make shipwreck of his own soul and of the souls of his hearers and readers together.]

These are very bold and sweeping asser-

tions. Let us open our Bibles and examine them.

The first place in which we meet with the word *flesh* (Heb. בָּשָׂר, Gr. σὰρξ) is Gen. ii. 21, "And closed up *the flesh* instead thereof." Here is the simple, original meaning of the word. See also ver. 23, where it occurs again in the same sense. And the next place is Gen. ii. 24, "And they shall be one *flesh*:" which is quoted four times in the New Testament (Matt. xix. 5, 6; Mark x. 8; 1 Cor. vi. 16; Eph. v. 31). Thus both in the Old and New Testaments the word is distinctly applied, in one of its derived or secondary senses, to *Man before the Fall*. Had man *before the Fall* any thing about him that was "sinful, God-hating, rebellious," &c.? The Scripture tells us, on the contrary, that "God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was *very good*" (Gen. i. 31).

The word is used, both in the Old and New Testaments, of the body *after the resurrection*: Job xix. 26, "Yet in my *flesh* shall I see God." And (Luke xxiv. 39) our

Lord Himself says, "A spirit hath not *flesh* and bones, as ye see Me have." I presume it is not questioned by any, that *this flesh* is not only "good and holy," but "strong, immortal, and perfect."

Once more : although, in speaking of spiritual things, "the flesh" is frequently opposed to "the Spirit"—and therefore the context determines it to a *bad sense*, to signify that which is carnal, corrupt, rebellious, &c.—yet it is evident that there is no bad sense *necessarily* attached to the word ; for it is sometimes used in a *good sense*, and applied distinctly to the *new nature*, wrought in us by the Holy Ghost. Ezek. xi. 19, and xxxvi. 26, "And will give them a heart of *flesh*." This is rendered by the Septuagint και δωσω αυτοις καρδιαν σαρκινην : which expression is alluded to in the New Testament—εν πλαξι καρδιας σαρκιναις, "in *fleshly* tables of the heart" (2 Cor. iii. 3). This will perhaps explain what David says, "*My flesh* longeth for Thee, in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is : " and again, "My heart and *my flesh* crieth out for the living God" (Ps. lxiii. 1, lxxxiv. 2).

But, according to Mr. Drummond, that is always "a *sinful, God-hating, rebellious, ignorant thing*," which the Psalmist tell us in his case *longed and cried out for the living God*!—Now what are we to think of the presumption and confidence of the man who, pretending to instruct the Church respecting such a glorious mystery as the Incarnation of Christ, betrays, in the grand assertion on which his argument turns, such total ignorance of the mere letter of Scripture?

The word "flesh," in Scripture, is used, in almost nine cases out of ten, to express *the mere substance* of which the bodies, whether of men or animals, are formed, without any perceptible reference to *moral* qualifications. The distinct usage of the word in a *bad sense*, as opposed to spirit, is chiefly confined to the writings of St. Paul. The passages in which it is applied to Christ, insisting on the truth and reality of His incarnation, in opposition to the notions of the Gnostics, are chiefly found in the writings of St. John. See John i. 14; 1 John iv. 2; 2 John 7. And in interpreting

Scripture it is necessary to have some reference to the line of argument which the Holy Ghost was pleased to assign to each of the sacred penmen ; which led them to use certain words in a peculiar sense.

Mr. D.'s attempt to make out that the Fathers and other eminent writers maintained the monstrous notion that the flesh of Christ was " sinful, God-hating, and rebellious," is as dishonest as it is futile. I cannot discover that one of his quotations proves his point ; and certainly it would be easy to produce other passages from those writers (so far as I have been able to examine them) which would prove that they were far from ascribing any *sinful* infirmity to the flesh of Christ. Beza, for example, who is particularly careful to maintain the true humanity of Christ against the errors of the Docetæ, says on Rom. i. 3, "*Secundùm carnem, κατὰ σαρκά* : Id est, quatenus homo est. *Caro* enim hoc loco per synecdochen totam hominis naturam declarat, et quidem quatenus *infirm*a est (quæ tamen infirmitas duntaxat fuit ad tempus), *non autem quasi in Christo*

fuerit ullo modo vitiosa. "According to the *flesh* : That is, so far as He is man. For the *flesh* in this place, by synecdoche, declares the whole nature of man, and this indeed so far as it is *weak* (which infirmity however was only for the time), *but not as if in Christ it was in any respect vicious.*"—And again, even in one of the passages which Mr. D. has quoted (though it is so inaccurately given as to be unintelligible, and he takes care *not* to translate it), on Heb. iv. 15 : "*Tentatum, περιπασημενον.* Neque enim nudam corporis et animæ substantiam assumpsit, sed omnibus nostris ærumnis, omnibus denique peccatorum nostrorum pœnis obnoxiam : *ita tamen ut recta et integra in eo fuerint omnia, nec unquam caro illa, id est vitiositas, in eo fuerit quæ Spiritui repugnat.*" "*Tempted.* For neither did he assume the naked substance of a body and soul, but obnoxious to all our sorrows—in fine, to all the penalties of our sins : yet so that all things were right and perfect in Him ; **NOR EVER WAS THERE IN HIM THAT FLESH, that is, that viciousness, WHICH RESISTS THE SPIRIT.**"

The question at issue respecting the human nature of our blessed Lord has been (as it seems to me) very ill conducted on both sides. I have as yet discovered very little either of Christian wisdom or of Christian temper in either of the contending parties. I cannot flatter myself with any expectation of doing good to either : but perhaps the following observations may serve to put the question in such a point of view as may tend to the establishment of the humble believer, who desires to know the truth as it is in Jesus.

The two dangers, between which we have to steer, are these :—1st. *The denial of the true and proper humanity of Christ*, which would set aside all our interest in Him, as our Kinsman-Redeemer, the Brother of our nature, our proper and sufficient Head and Representative, and our sympathizing Friend ; which is noted in Scripture as a fatal error—(compare Heb. ii. 17, iv. 15, v. 1, 2, 7—10, with 1 John iv. 1—3, and 2 John 7)—and which, moreover, is proved, by the records of Ecclesiastical History, to

stand in close connection with Arianism, in some of its modifications : for those who are unsound as to the humanity of Christ are very apt to be so likewise as to His Divinity. —2d. *The ascription of any thing sinful or unholy to the human nature of our blessed Lord :* which would also overthrow the whole work of redemption, and set aside the reality of any atonement, substitution, or satisfaction ; besides being in itself blasphemous, and tending to give us very light and unscriptural views of the true nature both of sin and holiness.

I think it is evident that some of those who oppose Mr. Irving are falling into the former of these errors ; and that others are *afraid* of stating the true Scriptural doctrine, in such a plain and unequivocal manner as its importance demands, and the tempted soul of the tried and afflicted Christian requires. But that, on the other hand, Mr. I. is disseminating awful errors, and falling himself deeper and deeper into most dangerous, and even soul-destroying heresies, I have no doubt whatever.

I have carefully examined some of Mr. I.'s writings, and I find that two things require attention : 1. *The expressions* he has sometimes used ; 2. *The doctrine* which he really intends to convey. In order to get to the bottom of this intricate question it is necessary to make this distinction between *his expressions* and *his doctrines*, especially in the present state of the controversy ; for I have not yet been able to hear of any one person, even among the professed and most decided Irvingites, who does not give up, and even condemn, many of his *expressions*. Indeed, Mr. Irving *in a manner* gives them up himself (I wish I could say it was a plain, straightforward, manly, and Christian manner).

With respect to some of these *expressions*, I know not what to term them but downright *blasphemies*. [It is, however, but common justice to Mr. I. to mention, that the most horrible and revolting of these expressions he affirms to have arisen from a mere misprint ; the transposition or insertion of a comma having led some to connect an epithet with "the Human Nature of Christ," which he

intended to apply to "material things."'] Whatever be Mr. I.'s *doctrine*, the expressions he has used must be condemned as shocking and revolting to all pious ears ; and the Church of God has a right to expect, that, instead of *indirectly* giving them up as indefensible, he should come forward and *openly* renounce and condemn them, and humble himself before God and man for ever having used them. I cannot understand how any man who has uttered, however inadvertently, such expressions, as are to be found in Mr. I.'s writings respecting the human nature of Christ, can presume to stand up before a *Christian* congregation, until he has first humbled himself in the very dust, and *publicly* apologized.

Nevertheless, I am well aware that a man may use very indefensible, and even horrible, *expressions*, in setting forth a *doctrine* which, if calmly and properly stated, is perfectly sound and orthodox. Therefore it is only giving advantage to our adversaries if we go on censuring *the expressions*, without proceeding to the examination of *the doctrine* soberly stated.

After carefully examining Mr. I.'s *doctrine* on this point, I cannot express the sum and substance of it any other way than by saying, that *he imputes original sin to our blessed Lord*. He denies this. Then I say, If this is not what he means, he means nothing ; and all the noise and trouble that he has made in the Church has been about nothing. But, not content to deny the charge, he attempts to disprove it ; and in that attempt *he proves it* ; for he cannot escape from this charge except by giving a new definition of original sin. "Towards the right settlement of this question, the first thing necessary is to understand what original sin is. Is it a sin to be born as we are, through natural generation ? Doubtless it is. And why ? Because we are born mortal and corruptible, whereas we were created immortal and incorruptible, and are responsible to our Creator for what we so received from Him...If then, original sin stand in our having been created otherwise than we are now born, &c....And this alone original sin regards." (Christ's Holiness in Flesh, pp. 3, 4.

I have endeavoured to extract all that

makes up the definition : for, though much discussion intervenes, I do not see that any thing is added to *the definition*. Mr. I. confines it to the guilt of losing our creation state. In other words, he includes nothing in the idea of original sin beyond the mere imputation of Adam's sin. This will suit very well with the views of some Popish writers ; but it takes in only a portion of the doctrine of original sin, as stated and received by the Protestant churches. The Westminster Confession, which Mr. Irving has solemnly subscribed, says on this point :

“ They ” (our first parents) “ being the root of all mankind, the guilt of their sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions. This corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated : and although it be, through

Christ, pardoned and mortified, yet both itself and all the motions thereof are truly and properly sin." (Chap. vi. § iii.—v.)

The Larger Catechism says to the same purpose :—

"The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consisteth in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of that righteousness wherein he was created, and the corruption of his nature, whereby he is utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually; which is commonly called Original Sin, and from which do proceed all actual transgressions." (Ans. to Q. 25.)

Our own Article "Of Original or Birth Sin," runs thus :—

"Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam—as the Pelagians do vainly talk—but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature in-

clined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit; and therefore, in every person, born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated: whereby the lust of the flesh, called in Greek *phronema sarkos*, which some do expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection, some the desire of the flesh, is not subject to the Law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized, yet the Apostle doth confess that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin." (Art. IX.)

Now it is evident that a vast deal more is contained in these definitions of original sin than in Mr. I.'s. When, therefore, he sets aside these definitions, and substitutes one of his own which is materially different, what does it amount to but an indirect acknowledgment that (*in the received and orthodox sense of the term*) he does impute Original Sin to our blessed Lord's human nature? His argument would represent Him indeed as

free from the *guilt* of it. Yet even this very lamely : for he says, " If, then, original sin stand in our having been created otherwise than we now are born, it cannot apply to Christ, who was not then created at all, but is Himself the Creator." What is this but a mere evasion ? The question is not concerning *the Divine nature* of Christ, but concerning *His human nature*, and what Mr. I. ascribes *to this*. I presume that Mr. I. does not suppose that His human nature was " the Creator ?" Again : " He stands acquitted from all charge of original sin, by the fact of his not having been created." Does Mr. I. mean to say that Christ's human nature was not created ?—When Mr. I. has recourse to such a lame and impotent evasion, does he not know, in his secret soul, that he really does charge our blessed Lord with original sin ? and that, while he dares not confess, he cannot deny it ; and therefore must be content to evade the real question at issue. He ascribes to Him indeed all the *corruption* and *pollution* of it, though not of any actual transgression.

I conclude, therefore, that Mr. I.'s doctrine, in its most calm and sober statement, is unscriptural and heretical; directly opposed to those Scriptures which speak of Christ's human nature as *holy-begotten* (Luke i. 35, Gr.), and say that "He knew no sin" (2 Cor. v. 21).

Further I would observe, that all that Mr. I. asserts or argues upon this subject rests upon five or six fallacies which he assumes:—

1. *That the word "flesh" must always be understood in a bad sense, as implying that which is sinful, rebellious, and corrupt.* This I have answered already by simple reference to the Scriptures.

2. *That the nature of man since the Fall is quite a different thing from the nature of man before it.* This point I have also discussed in the outset: and I need only add, that the Scriptures apply the word *Adam* (which more especially denotes *the nature of man*) just as much to man *before* the Fall as *after*: and the law against murder, declared after the Deluge, assigns the glory of *man's proper nature* as a reason for the punishment de-

nounced against that crime : " Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed : *for in the image of God made He man*" (Gen. ix. 6) : thus reminding us, that, though he is now universally in ruins and horribly depraved, still the nature of which he partakes is excellent and glorious. Those, therefore, who have written best on the subject of man's present condition, have distinctly pointed out that he is evidently in an *unnatural* state. (See especially Howe's *Living Temple*, part ii. ch. iv.)

It is, however, true, that sometimes we use the word *nature* in a less strict and philosophical way ; and by *man's nature* we mean only to express what he is *by birth*, i. e. his present ruined condition, as a child of fallen Adam (Eph. ii. 3). Or we may have reference to the *nature of a ruin*, as such, without particularly considering *the nature of the building* of which it is a ruin : and thus (the limitation perhaps being rather implied than expressed) we speak of that which properly pertains to a fallen, sinful, and depraved creature, *as such*, under such

expressions as "man's corrupted nature," "fallen nature," and the like : of which examples are not wanting among judicious writers. Nevertheless, when we speak of *human nature, as such*, and of what properly belongs to it, there can be no doubt as to the proper meaning of the term, among those who know what it is to think or speak correctly. If a noble tree had been shivered by lightning, an intelligent person passing by might discourse very aptly concerning *the nature of that tree* ; and every one could understand that *this nature* was not affected in the least by the direful bolt which had split the tree to pieces.

3. *That if there were in the human nature of Christ no trace of those tendencies to sin which give Satan such fearful advantage against us, He could not have been "tempted like as we are"—He could not have been tempted at all.* Here again we have gross ignorance of Scripture. Our first parents certainly had none of those tendencies to sin which characterize our present fallen condition ; yet *they* were not only *tempted*, but *yielded to the temptation*,

and fell. And what was the nature of the temptation? "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof" (Gen. iii. 6). Here we have "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life"—the three forms in which temptation continually assails *us*, the three forms under which our Lord Himself was assailed by the tempter (See Matt. iv. 3—10, and Luke iv. 3—12). Surely the distinction between *liability to temptation* and *tendencies to sin* is sufficiently clear and broad; yet Mr. Irving and his followers entirely overlook it.

4. *That the tendency to sin which is entwined with our very being in our present fallen and sinful state—or, in other words, the lusting of the flesh* (which resists and opposes the Spirit) *is not sin.* This mistake is the less excusable in one who has solemnly signed that Confession which says expressly that both "itself, and all the motions thereof, are truly and properly sin." The Papists, indeed, deny

that it is sin ; the natural man cannot endure to call it sin ; but really humble Christians in all ages have confessed and bewailed it as such. And, if we duly consider it, it involves a direct breach of the Tenth Commandment : so soon as a desire can be perceived, by the searching eyes of God, that needs to be repressed by the power of the Spirit, that commandment is already broken.

It is important to call particular attention to this point ; for perhaps the real question at issue would be found to be, " What is sin ? Is the lusting of the flesh sin, or not ? " This I think is a very simple question to any humble and careful reader of the Scriptures : for if resistance to the Spirit be not actual *sin*, I know not what is : if " enmity against God " be not *sin*, what is ? Yet we are told expressly that " the carnal mind is enmity against God " — το φρονημα της σαρκος, ἐχθρὸς εἰς θεον (Rom. viii. 7). And if that which " is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," be not really and truly *sin*, again I say, what is ? for whatever is not accord-

ing to the Law is sin: *ἡ ἀμαρτία ἐστὶν ἡ ἀνομία* (1 John iii. 4). Lastly, is not this lusting of the flesh, this resistance which the flesh offers to the Spirit, exactly what St. Paul calls "*sin that dwelleth in me*?" *ἡ οὐκουσα ἐν ἐμοὶ ἀμαρτία* (Rom. vii. 17 and 29). That is to say, is it not expressly called *sin* in Scripture? Denying this to be sin, Mr. Irving has found out a very compendious method of at once *humbling the Saviour* and *exalting the sinner*; than which nothing could be more contrary to the design and spirit of the Gospel: for he first pulls down the holiness of Christ to *our* standard, and then (of course) he has fair ground to say that we may be as holy as Christ. But this is something like the *argumentum in circulo*.

5. *That the flesh is* (properly speaking) *sinful*. As if the seat of sin were in *the matter* of which our bodies are formed! This fallacy is constantly assumed in Mr. I.'s argument: and it begins in a confusion of mind as to the different senses in which the word "*flesh*," is taken. I suppose Mr. I. would allow that the "*flesh*," properly so called—i. e. the

substance of the body—is a mere instrument; and that the real seat of sin is in the soul: yet he argues as if Christ could not be really partaker of our flesh and blood without taking upon Him “the flesh of sin:” in “the likeness” of which (ἐν ὁμοιωματι σαρκος ἀμαρτίας) He was sent indeed; but Mr. I. should remember the old saying, “*Similis non est idem*” (The like is not the same).

6. *That sin and corruption are essential attributes of human nature.* Mr. I. says triumphantly, “Now I ask, was it not an *essential attribute* of the human nature of his mother to be under the law of sin and death?” (On the Human Nature of Christ, p. 35). I answer, Certainly not; or she could never by any means have been delivered from that law, without ceasing to be a human being. The man who asks such a question must be strangely ignorant or forgetful of the meaning of terms. Take away any one *essential attribute* of human nature, and it ceases at once to be *human nature*. Every *essential attribute* of human nature must have belonged to Adam before the Fall; must have

been given him by creation : otherwise *man* is not the creature of *God* at all. If sin be an *essential attribute* of human nature, either man is the creature of the devil, or God is the author of sin. A great deal of Mr. I.'s reasoning would bring us into this awful dilemma. Before he writes on such subjects, we might with all reason expect him to distinguish between "*essential attributes*" and *separable accidents*.

There is also in Mr. I.'s writings a continual confusion between *sinful* and *sinless infirmities*. Every passage of Scripture, or of orthodox writers, which proves or acknowledges that Christ was partaker of all our *sinless* infirmities, is adduced by Mr. I. as a proof or admission that He came in "*sinful flesh*." No one should venture to write upon such a deep and mysterious, yet blessed and important, subject as the Incarnation of Christ, who has not learned to make, and carefully observe, this distinction. I shall go as far as any one in maintaining that Christ was partaker with us in *every thing BUT sin and pollution* ; but when Mr. I.

attributes to His human nature *that* which all pious men in all ages have universally confessed to be *sin and pollution*, here I must stand up and rebuke him as a bold and reckless blasphemer.

And here it may not be unimportant to add a few words respecting Mr. I.'s way of writing in general, from which, perhaps, more danger may be apprehended than even from the doctrines in question. He has certainly great powers, a brilliant imagination, great command of language, an original turn of mind, and even *reckless* boldness in proclaiming his opinions. He has also not unfrequently detected errors and evils which more or less prevail—and I cannot help suspecting, that, if he had not uttered some important but unwelcome truths, he might have broached all his errors (awful as they are) without provoking much opposition or censure. On the other hand, there seems to be, in the very constitution of his mind, a total want of logical accuracy and sound judgement. Whatever comes into his head he utters, with overbearing vehemence, without

considering whether he has any argument to support his assertions or not. I have been willing to hope that he was a converted man, but the more I read of his works the less can I persuade myself that he is so. What he writes looks very much like the struggles of mere human intellect to make out the Gospel ; using often the words and expressions which belong to spiritual things and sound doctrine, but evidently in a different sense from that in which true believers have ever received them : so that I am often ready to say, This man, and Calvin and Luther and Beza and Knox and Usher, and other worthies, *seem* to be talking about the same things ; they use sometimes the same language ; but it is plain they would not in the least have understood one another : the ideas which occupy his mind have no correspondence with those which occupied theirs.

Mr. Irving, indeed, seems to have run into a kind of mysticism. In his imagined zeal for sanctification and holiness, he cares little what he makes of atonement and jus-

tification. He shakes the very foundations of the old-fashioned doctrines of imputation, sacrifice, and satisfaction : and I verily believe, that if he would express, in brief and clear definitions, what he means by these words, and by the terms justification, righteousness, redemption, &c., it would be found that his views on all these points, the ideas which he really attaches to these words, are entirely distinct from those which our Reformers and their successors have affixed to them. If I am mistaken (as I should be very glad to find myself), I can only say that Mr. I. has a wonderful talent for writing unintelligibly.

But I do not think that I judge him rashly or uncharitably, when I say that he has entered upon the downward road of error, and knows not whither he is hurrying. He throws the reins upon the neck of his imagination, and goes on speculating, without caring to check himself at every step by a constant reference to Scripture. I am surprised to see how little there is of Scripture in his statements. They are spun

out of his own brain, with only an occasional reference to isolated texts torn out of their connection. All that he writes betrays a very inaccurate mind ; and his fine powers seem only to beguile him into more errors and absurdities than he could have got into without them. I should take him, from all I see or can hear, to be a man very ignorant of his own heart ; and yet, from the first of his coming to London, he has set up to teach every body ; as if he were to enlighten the world, and no one had ever known how to preach the Gospel before him. He could never be content to say an old plain truth as others had said it before him ; but must always be giving us something new. This disposition is the root and origin of Neology ; of which there is more in Mr. I. and his followers than they are at all disposed to imagine. I have for some time been afraid that he was tumbling into that gulph which yawns to receive all daring speculators, all who follow their own reasonings and imaginations in religion,—even downright Socinianism ; and the last pro-

duction of his pen which I have seen, seems fully to justify those fears. For he says, in the last number but two of the Morning Watch ("Jesus our Ensample," p. 112): "For, whereas there may be found in my writings, here and there, an expression where I give the honour of Christ's work to his Godhead—not having myself escaped the trammels of the schools, or forgotten the dialect of Babylon—I do now solemnly protest that all such language is derogatory from the honour of God, which is altogether involved in this issue, with it to stand, or with it to fall; namely, That man, as he made him, is able in all respects to answer the ends for which he made him, of being a true, perfect, and complete image of God, a sufficient lord over all creation: which Christ proved by becoming man, and as man bodying forth the image of God, and holding dominion over all creation, and reclaiming what seemed to be lost, &c. It is short-sighted and erroneous to think we honour God by leaving the manhood of Christ, and finding occasion for his Godhead

in this his work, &c. And wherever, by any slip or oversight, I may have thus spoken, I have erroneously spoken," &c.

I do not see that there is a pin to choose between this and professed Socinianism. It was well said some time ago by Mr. Melvil, that "Mr. I. was in danger of making Christ's humanity the grave of His Divinity." Is this not now fulfilled? Has he not already done so?

Till I met with the above passage, I thought of pointing out the enmity of man's carnal heart against the Scriptural doctrine of the Atonement, which here and there appears in Mr. I.'s earlier works: whence it is but too manifest that he cannot bear to "live by the faith of the Son of God," who loved us, and gave Himself for us; nor that his best works and services should only be acceptable to God through the atoning sacrifice and prevailing intercession of Christ (see Art. XII. of the Church of England): but after such a passage this is needless.

A few words on another important sub-

ject—the natural connection between *heretical doctrine* and *moral obliquity*. One would have hoped that a man of such fearless boldness would at least be honest ; but it is not so. He evidently feels that in using certain expressions he has gone too far ; and in his subsequent writings he carefully avoids them ; but, instead of coming forward with an open, manly confession of his sin and error, he (in the Preface to “Christ’s Holiness in Flesh”) rather shuffles them to one side, with a sort of lame apology. Nor do I think I have met with one passage in his writings in which he fairly states the views of an opponent. He puts words into the mouth of an imaginary adversary : but where are the persons who really use those words, or the arguments they are intended to convey ? Often, too, he puts on the words of writers whom he does quote, constructions which are contradicted by other portions of their writings.

Then his conduct when called before the London Presbytery, on both occasions, was very inconsistent with Christian upright-

ness : for to refuse to answer to the charges brought by appealing to Matt. xviii. 15—17 was a mere unworthy evasion. That text does not apply. In case of any *personal offence* against myself, real or supposed, I am bound to proceed according to that rule ; but when a man sins against *the truth*, and against *the Church of God*, this is a very different matter ; and the Apostolic rule is, “Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear” (1 Tim. v. 20). And when Peter began to judaize at Antioch, I do not read that Paul went to confer with him *privately* ; but that he “withstood him to the face,” and reproved him “before them all” (Gal: ii. 11 and 14). Again : on his late trial, his long appeal to the Scriptures was nothing to the purpose, in that place and on that occasion. It was only throwing dust in the eyes of the unwary, to prevent them from seeing the real merits of the case. For that court had no power or authority (that I can see) to determine a question respecting the doctrines of Scripture, but only to enquire whether Mr. L., as

an honest man, adhered to his Ordination vows, promises, and subscriptions, and conducted the services of his church in a manner agreeable thereto. The only question to which such a court was competent, was a mere question about adherence to plain and solemn engagements. If Mr. I. thought those engagements unscriptural, his course was plain,—to retire at once from the ministry of the Kirk of Scotland, sending in to the proper authorities a formal statement of his conscientious or Scriptural reasons for so doing. This would have been acting like an honest man.

On the same occasion, his concealment of the awful facts concerning one of the “gifted sisters,” however he might choose to flourish about it, shewed a want of moral honesty and Christian integrity, highly disgraceful to a man who was set (as he seems to think himself) for the defence of great and important truths.

In the tract alluded to at the beginning of this note, I find the same want of moral integrity. The very title is a complete *take-*

in; and the quotations generally are partial, and so introduced and interpreted as to serve the purpose of the writer, but not the cause of truth. I thought, when I first read it, that the writer did well to conceal himself; for he might well be ashamed to put his name to it.

But, while I am fully aware of the dangers to be apprehended from Mr. I.'s manner of preaching and writing, both to the converted and the unconverted, I would not by any means overlook, that, in the wonderful ways of God—who works by what instruments He will, and very often brings the greatest good out of the greatest evil—he may be used as an important instrument in various ways; for the conversion and edification of some, and for awakening the church generally to the consideration of various important points which for a long season have been too much neglected. And if even his awful errors respecting the human nature of our blessed Lord should be overruled to compel both ministers and people to consider more deeply and fully those glorious

mysteries, which have of late years been too little insisted on, and most superficially handled (so that multitudes are not only utterly ignorant, but actually afraid to know any thing about them), we shall only have the more reason, in humble thankfulness, to admire and adore the wonderful ways of God, who makes every thing subservient to His everlasting purposes of love and mercy to His church. And as I am convinced that full and accurate statements of the glorious mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God are highly necessary at present, I gladly take the opportunity of introducing to my readers some extracts from Archbishop Usher's "Immanuel, or the Mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God unfolded," which I met with for the first time when my sermons on the subject were already printed. May God command his blessing upon them, for His dear Son's sake ! Amen.

"A notable wonder indeed, and great beyond all comparison : That the Son of God should be *made of a woman* ; even made of

that woman, which was made by Himself;
That her *womb* then, and the *heavens* now,
should contain Him, whom *the heaven of heavens* cannot contain.....

“ The untying of this knot dependeth upon the right understanding of the wonderfull conjunction of the divine and human Nature in the unity of the Person of our Redeemer. For by reason of the strictnesse of this personall union, whatsoever may bee verifed of either of those Natures, the same may be truly spoken of the whole Person, from whethersoever of the Natures it bee denominated. For the clearer conceiving whereof, wee may call to minde that which the Apostle hath taught us touching our Saviour: ‘ In Him dwelleth all the fulnesse of the Godhead bodily ’—that is to say, by such a personall and reall union, as doth inseparably and everlastingly conjoyn that infinite Godhead with his finite Manhood, in the unity of the self-same individuall Person.

“ Hee in whom that fulnesse dwelleth, is the *Person*: that fulnesse which so doth dwell in him, is the *Nature*. Now there

dwelleth in Him, not onely the fulnesse of the Godhead, but the fulnesse of the Manhood also. For wee beleve Him to bee both perfect God, begotten of the substance of his Father before all worlds ; and perfect Man, made of the substance of His mother in the fulnesse of time. And therefore wee must hold, that there are two distinct Natures in Him ; and two so distinct, that they doe not make one compounded nature, but still remain uncompounded and unfounded together. But Hee in whom the fulnesse of the Manhood dwelleth is not one, and Hee in whom the fulnesse of the Godhead, another ; but Hee in whom the fulnesse of both those natures dwelleth, is one and the same Immanuel, and consequently it must bee beleaved as firmly that Hee is but one *Person*.

“And here wee must consider, that the divine Nature did not assume an humane Person, but the divine Person did assume an humane Nature : and that of the Three Divine Persons, it was neither the First nor the Third that did assume this nature ;

but it was the middle Person, who was to be the middle one, that must undertake this mediation betwixt God and us ; which was otherwise also most requisite, as well for the better preservation of the integrity of the blessed Trinity in the Godhead, as for the higher advancement of mankind by means of that relation which the second Person the Mediator did beare unto his Father. For if the fulnesse of the Godhead should have thus dwelt in any humane person, there should then a fourth Person necessarily have been added unto the Godhead : and if any of the three Persons beside the second, had been born of a woman, there should have been two Sons in the Trinity. Whereas now the Son of God and the Son of the blessed Virgin, being but one Person, is consequently but one Son ; and so no alteration at all made in the relations of the Persons of the Trinity.....

“The nature assumed, is ‘the seed of Abraham’ (Heb. ii. 16), ‘the seed of David,’ (Rôm. i. 3), ‘the seed of the Woman’ (Gen. iii. 15) ; ‘the Word,’ the second person of

the Trinity, being 'made flesh'—that is to say, God's own Son being 'made of a woman,' and so becoming truly and really 'the fruite of her wombe.' Neither did hee take the substance of our nature onely, but all the properties also, and the qualities thereof: so as it might bee said of him, as it was of Elias and the Apostles, that 'hee was a man subject to like passions as we are!' Yea hee subjected himself, 'in the dayes of his flesh,' to the same weaknesse which we find in our fraile nature, and was compassed with like infirmities; and, in a word, 'in all things was made like unto his brethren,' sin onely excepted. Wherein yet wee must consider, that as hee tooke upon him, not an humane *Person*, but an humane *Nature*, so it was not requisite hee should take upon him any personall infirmities—such as are, madnesse, blindnesse, lamenesse, and particular kindes of diseases—which are incident to some onely and not to all men in generall; but those alone which doe accompany the whole Nature of

mankinde, such as are hungry, thirsting, wearinesse, griefe, paine, and mortality.

“ Wee are further here also to observe in this our Melchisedec, that as he had no Mother in regard of one of his natures, so he was to have no Father in regard of the other; but must bee born of a pure and immaculate Virgin, without the help of any man: according to that which is written; ‘ The Lord hath created a new thing in the earth: a woman shall compasse a man.’ And this also was most requisite, as for other respects, so for the exemption of the assumed nature from the imputation and pollution of Adam’s sin. For sin having by that one man entred into the world, every father becommeth an Adam unto his childe, and conveyeth the corruption of his nature unto all those whom hee doth beget *. Therefore

* It is well worth observing, in connection with this part of Archbishop Usher’s statement, that the transmission of corruption is ascribed in Scripture to *the father*, and yet the nearness of relationship is counted by *the mother*. For we read, “ Adam . . . begat a son in his own likeness, after his image : ” while

our Saviour assuming the substance of our nature, but not by the ordinary way of naturall generation, is thereby freed from all the touch and taint of the corruption of our flesh ; which by that means onely is propagated from the first man unto his posterity. Whereupon, hee being made *of* man, but

of Eve it is only said "she conceived and bare Cain" (Gen. iv. 1, and v. 3). And yet it is said by the Psalmist, "Thou sittest against thy brother ; thou slanderest *thine own mother's son*" (Ps. l. 20) ; in which expression a climax is evidently intended ; it was not only his "brother," but his "*own mother's son*"—whom therefore he was more especially bound to love and cherish. See also Judg. viii. 19 ; Deut. xiii. 6 ; Ps. lxi. 8 ; Cant. viii. 1. So that our blessed Lord, as to His human nature, had no *father* from whom to inherit our corruption ; yet was he most truly partaker of our flesh and blood, and most closely united to us in the ~~bonds~~ of tenderness and affection, because the links of relationship which bind Him to us were on the most endeared and tender side. It is also evident that the child partakes much more of *the substance* of its mother than of its father ; being fed and nourished with her own heart's blood in the womb, and from her own bosom afterwards ; which of itself gave rise to a very tender and endeared relationship, according to the customs and feelings of all ancient nations : for the ties which bound a man to his foster-mother and to his foster-brother could never be slighted or forgotten, without exposing him to disgrace and infamy.

not *by* man, and so becomming the immediate fruit of the *womb*, and not of the *loyns*, must of necessity bee acknowledged to be that *holy* thing, which so was born of so blessed a mother. Who although shee were but the passive and materiall principle of which that precious flesh was made, and the Holy Ghost the agent and efficient; yet cannot the man Christ Jesus thereby bee made the Son of his own Spirit. Because fathers doe beget their children out of their own substance: the Holy Ghost did not so, but framed the flesh of him, from whom himself proceeded, out of the creature of them both, ‘the handmaid of our Lord,’ whom from thence ‘all generations shall call blessed.’

“That blessed womb of hers was the bride-chamber wherein the Holy Ghost did knit that indissoluble knot betwixt our humane nature and his Deity: the Son of God assuming into the unity of his person that which before hee was not; and yet without change (for so must God still bee) remaining that which hee was, whereby it came to

pass that 'this Holy Thing which was born of her' was indeed and in truth to be called 'the Son of God.' Which wonderful connexion of two so infinitely differing natures in the unity of one person, how it was there effected, is an inquisition fitter for an angelical intelligence, than for our shallow capacities to look after: to which purpose also wee may observe, that in the fabric of the ark of the Covenant, the posture of the faces of the Cherubims toward the mercy-seat (the type of our Saviour) was such as would point unto us that these are the things which 'the angels desire to stoope, and look into.'

"And therefore let that satisfaction which the angel gave unto the mother virgin (whom it did more specially concern to move the question 'How may this bee?') content us, 'The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee.' For as the former part of that speech may inform us that 'with God nothing is impossible,' so the latter may put us in minde, that the same God having 'overshadowed' this mystery with

his own vaile, wee should not presume, with the men of Bethshemesh to look into this ark of his; lest for our curiosity wee bee smitten, as they were. Onely this wee may safely say, and most firmly hold, that as the distinction of persons in the Holy Trinity hindereth not the unity of the Nature of the Godhead, although every Person entirely holdeth his owne incommunicable property; so neither doth the distinction of the two Natures in our Mediator any way crosse the unity of his Person, although each Nature remaineth intire in itself, and retaineth the properties agreeing thereunto, without any conversion, composition, commixtion, or confusion."

I beseech my readers to contrast the holy reverence and godly fear which are apparent in the whole of this statement of the great and pious Usher, with the reckless boldness and rashness of Mr. Irving in treating of the same mysterious subject.

Here let me add a few words upon another subject, which is intimately connected with Mr. Irving's views and statements of doctrine.

After such careful pausing and examination as seemed to be required by the Apostle, 1 John iv. 1—3, I cannot indulge even a favourable hope with respect to the alleged gifts and manifestations in Mr. Irving's church ; for the following reasons :

1. Mr. Irving's doctrine, as I have already shewn, is *unscriptural* and *heretical*, and the terms in which he has sometimes propounded it actually *blasphemous*. This, of course, though not altogether decisive, throws a very strong suspicion on the alleged manifestations.

2. No one has yet proved *that the alleged tongue was a tongue at all*. *As far as appears*, it has been mere gibberish. And there seems to have been an evident reluctance to meet this question fairly. Surely, during the many months that have elapsed since these alleged manifestations first took place, there have been in this great city persons who understood almost every, if not every, language under heaven ; and, had proper pains been taken, by those whose business it was, it might have been ascertained whe-

ther it were any tongue that is known among the multitudes who dwell in or visit this city from all corners of the earth. But there has been an evident shrinking from this ; a rejection of this sober way of bringing the miracle to the test to which that on the day of Pentecost was evidently, by a wonderful providence, subjected. Those who receive it are rather content to leave it on the same ground as transubstantiation, which requires a second miracle to ascertain that any miracle has been wrought.

3. The rules laid down in 1 Cor. xiv. are not observed. For how is it to be reconciled with the whole passage, vers. 6—11, that any one should speak in the church when not only no one else understands him, *but he does not even understand himself?* when (as it is there expressed) *he is a barbarian to himself?* even supposing that he does really speak a language, which is not yet proved. Such a person could not even say *Amen* to his own prayer! (16, 17). And here observe, that though mention is made (ver. 14) of praying with one's *spirit* while the un-

derstanding is unfruitful, it appears, from a comparison with ver. 19, that this is the *communicative understanding*, which is unfruitful *to others* ; for he who instructs *others* is said *to speak with the understanding*. It cannot be fairly inferred from ver. 14, taken in connection with the whole passage, that the man did not understand himself. And surely it is very easy to conceive that he might speak languages which he could not interpret (or translate) to the Corinthians—either on account of his very imperfect acquaintance with the Greek ; or because he had not in that language *the gift of utterance*, so as to be able to express himself with sufficient clearness, to the edification of the church.

Again : the Apostle says, in this same chapter, and following immediately upon the directions concerning the exercise of spiritual gifts, “ Let your *women* keep silence in the churches : for it is not permitted unto them to speak ” (ver. 34). They might still have *gifts*, to be exercised in *the private circle*, or *when only women*, and perhaps *children*, were present : but the simple and obvious

meaning of these words is, that on no occasion whatsoever, nor under any pretence, should they speak in the churches, or public assemblies of God's people. This plain and obvious meaning of that verse is very inconvenient, I know, to Mr. I.'s people, and therefore they must needs have recourse to such methods of explaining it away as would serve to explain away any text in the Bible. What is this better than Neology? And even had their attempted explanations much more shew of probability than they have, the circumstances of so large a majority of the speakers being women would, in connection with ver. 34, be a very suspicious circumstance.

4. I have had opportunities, entirely unsought, of witnessing some of these exhibitions * : and I must say, that I expected

* I say, entirely *unsought* : for when I became acquainted with Mr. I.'s doctrines I could not reconcile it to my views of duty, as a Christian, and especially as a Christian minister, to be present at the services of his church, where I had too much reason to fear that I might hear doctrines and expressions which I could not but regard as blasphemous, without an opportunity of protesting against them. I suspect some

something at least far more *imposing* than any thing I witnessed—something that carried with it the semblance at least of being *supernatural*: but, instead of this, all that I have witnessed seemed calculated to set aside every idea of any kind of supernatural influence: and, in the instances which I had the best opportunities of observing, the exhibition was attended with such manifest improprieties, as tended to give no favourable opinion of the person claiming the gift, in any point of view, and seemed altogether irreconcilable with ver. 40.

good persons have fallen very deeply into delusion, in consequence of trifling with the heresies and blasphemous expressions which Mr. I. has uttered, and venturing to attend his ministry in spite of them. They have deliberately entered upon forbidden ground, and exposed themselves to evil and temptation out of mere curiosity: and is it to be wondered that their souls have suffered? They might think it the shortest way of satisfying themselves as to the manifestations in question: but for myself I must say, that, though I have had to wait long for accurate information, and have exposed myself to no little reproach because I would not pronounce any judgement till I had grounds which were satisfactory to my own mind,—I rejoice that I have taken the safest though slowest method, and have been content to wait long for the evidence and opportunities which I needed

I have heard, too, of forty persons sent out by Mr. I. to preach the Gospel in the streets. One of these I had opportunity of hearing not long ago : but neither myself, nor others, who listened much longer than I did, could hear so much as one word of Gospel, or any thing that tended to spiritual edification. The man made a vast deal of noise, in a strained and unnatural tone of voice : but with one tenth part of the apparent exertion he might have made himself much more intelligibly heard to all who surrounded him. A little consideration of ver. 9 might not have been amiss, for it was difficult to understand what he was saying.

5. Then it is now well known that two of the persons among the principal claimants of these spiritual gifts—one of these, I think, the first person who interrupted and disturbed the order and worship of Mr. I.'s church ; and the other a man who was for a time considered the most eminent among them all—have solemnly acknowledged that, *in their instances*, there was nothing spiritual or divine : the one confessing that she was

guilty of *deliberate imposture* (than which what could be more awful in such a case?), and the other, with deep contrition and godly sorrow, acknowledging that he was under *an awful delusion of the devil*. Taking these circumstances, in connection with all that I have mentioned before, as reasons for questioning, if not absolutely rejecting, the claim, what must we *now* conclude respecting the whole?

For some time before I knew any thing of the last-mentioned facts, or had any opportunity of observing any of these exhibitions, I could only think of two reasons for still suspending my judgement:—1. That the persons supposed to be gifted had been found, in the first instance, *out* of Mr. I.'s congregation, and then were by him brought into connection with it: it did not therefore appear how far there was any *real* connection between the gifts asserted, and the heretical doctrines which Mr. I. maintained. 2. That we cannot easily tell how far it may please God to grant *miraculous gifts* to *miraculous faith*—independent and regardless of doc-

trinal errors held by the person who has faith to expect miracles: for I suppose it will not be questioned that Judas exercised miraculous gifts as well as the rest of the Apostles; yet it not only plainly appears that he was utterly destitute of *saving faith* (and so came under the awful description of characters mentioned Matt. vii. 21—23), but there seems good reason to suppose that he was actually a *Socinian*: for, when all the other Apostles called our Saviour “Lord” (Κυριε), Judas called Him only “Master” (Παββε): nor does he appear ever to have given him a higher title. (Compare Matt. xxvi. 22 and 25; also 49, and Mark xiv. 45.) These two considerations led me to wait long, and to give time for the clearing up of the question whether it was really a *tongue* that was spoken. But in the mean time, all the persons supposed to be gifted seem very distinctly to have lent themselves to the support and confirmation (as they deem it) of a doctrine which I am fully satisfied is contrary to the word of God: so that I can no longer imagine the connection to be

forced, or accidental, but real. I am therefore not only warranted, but directed, by Deut. xiii. to reject the alleged miraculous gifts and manifestations altogether, however they are to be accounted for; about which still there may be an awful question; for they may be *supernatural*, though not *divine*.

But is it desirable to enquire yet further into the practical tendency of Mr. Irving's views and doctrines? We have an awful exemplification in the conduct of his followers (or, should I rather say, *his guides and leaders*?)—and, in the spirit which they have manifested—with regard to the Church of England. Those persons who, but a little while ago, were the strongest and staunchest upholders of Establishments, pretending *now* to immediate revelations from heaven, have ranged themselves, with one consent, upon the side of the basest and vilest of the children of the devil—the Papists, the Infidels, and the Radicals of the day—to pull down those National Establishments, which once, with equal confidence and overbearing vehemence, they upheld and ex-

tolled to the skies ! And herein they are doing *exactly what the worst passions of disappointed men would lead them to do*. Surely these things are worth observing. Surely it is worth while to contrast their present position and opinions with their former, in order to form some judgement, what spirit they are of, and what master they serve.

For if it be said, they wanted more liberty than the discipline of those churches allowed them ;—be it so. They might have withdrawn themselves to seek that liberty, *without becoming enemies and destroyers*. Yea—they might still have loved, upheld, and supported that parental roof, from which they felt constrained to go out because it was too narrow for them. But they have chosen rather to act the part of ungrateful, apostate, and rebellious children, and to join with its worst enemies in pulling it down ! And are such things to be ascribed to the Spirit of the Lord ?

But *they say*, “ We take the Bible only to be our standard, and we cleave to that.” This is easily SAID : but let us remember

that the *Neologians of Germany*, in whose steps (in many respects) they are treading, *said the same before them, as loudly and vehemently as they can do*, and used the name of the Bible to set aside every thing that is Scriptural. To trample upon creeds, formularies, and old established doctrines and systems of divinity, under pretence of exalting the Bible, has been the grand artifice and characteristic feature of Neology all along. And is it likely that, when men begin with trampling upon all that the Lord has been teaching His Church out of the Scriptures, for so many ages and generations, *they* should be the persons to find out, and teach to others, the true sense and meaning of the Scriptures?

CONCLUSION.

I endeavoured yet further to point out the practical tendency of Irvingism, in some remarks upon "the Morning Watch," at the conclusion of the volume from which the above extracts are made: but, as that Journal is now extinct, I will not repeat them

here. It need only be added, that those who have deeply studied the Scriptures, and the History of the Church, with reference to similar delusions, cannot but know too well, that such awful errors must of necessity lead, sooner or later, to practical abominations. There is something specious and imposing in the whole system, when first presented to the mind. It pretends to point out a short and royal road to holiness. And we all know that holiness is greatly to be desired. The idea of attaining thereunto *at once* is very pleasing to the *flesh*; which revolts from nothing more than from the long process of deep and deeper humiliation—of continual conflict, and self-crucifixion, to which the Scriptures call us, and which is exemplified in the experience of the most eminent Christians, from Augustine down to Henry Martyn. Moreover, if a man could fancy himself perfectly holy, and therewith delivered from the necessity of living, from moment to moment, by faith upon Christ, with a creature-like and sinner-like dependence, how delightful would this

be to the carnal mind ! And to this would Mr. Irving's views of Sanctification bring us. There is, therefore, in them, enough to beguile the sincere but inexperienced Christian ; enough to please and flatter the old Adam. So that, considering the present state of the professing church, and the vast number of unsettled opinions which are afloat, it is not surprising that multitudes (and some of them really children of God) should, for a season, be beguiled hereby. But, sooner or later, these doctrinal errors, and the fair-seeming and high-sounding delusions which are connected with them, and the strong enthusiastic excitement which naturally arises from both combined, will lead into depths which it is awful even to think of. For let a man once imagine himself " holy, as Christ is holy ; " then, of course, there will soon be an end of humbly walking and striving against sin. While the excitement lasts, all perhaps *seems* to be going on very well : but the better a man seems to be going on *in this course*, the sooner will he be led into carnal security, and spiritual sloth.

High excitement is naturally followed by a corresponding re-action. And how near, high-wrought, but spurious, spiritual excitement is to the merest sensuality, those who have been really watchful over their own hearts can readily understand. According to God's righteous appointment too, pride must have a fall: and the devil is always at hand to take advantage of such a frame. Let none, therefore, be surprised at any depth of iniquities into which the subjects of such delusions may fall. But, my dear reader, if you love your own soul—if you have any desire to follow after holiness and godliness—take warning in good time. If you are yet beyond the verge of this fearful vortex, venture not near, but keep at the utmost possible distance from it. If you are in any measure drawn within the range of its dizzy whirl, escape for your life. There is no safety but in instant flight. The mental hallucination, which may steal upon you in consequence of any hesitation or delay, will soon put you beyond the reach of any friendly warning, however

earnestly and loudly spoken. Oh then take warning, while it is called to-day. I speak advisedly, and as the result of long and calm consideration of the subject. I might speak too in the name of older and wiser men, who would assure you that strongly as I have spoken, I have not spoken at all *more strongly* than the case requires :—though some may have too much of *this world's charity* (which is a very different thing from *Christian charity*), and others may be too far infatuated to believe it.

I will conclude with two passages from God's word;—which let us realize in our own experience, and then we shall be safe.

“I am crucified with Christ : nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me : and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”

“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I

unto the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God." (Gal. ii. 20; vi. 14—16).

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